

## Women Socialists and Woman Suffrage

### The Crying Need of the Socialist Movement Today Is Woman's Influence.

There is a very perceptible awakening at the present time in the American socialist movement in the line of the necessity of getting women interested in socialism. This new activity is seen in the numerous women's socialist clubs that are springing up all over the country.

But that there is beginning to be a new realization of the importance of women as an indispensable revolutionary element is evidenced in another direction; and that is the attention that is being paid to the necessity of obtaining the ballot for women as well as men.

The noble and wonderful stand that the English women have made for the right to express themselves in government, and the valiant fight the socialist party has made to sustain them seem to have fired both the woman suffragists and the socialists of America.

But, as seems to be the case in America with almost every practical question which the socialist movement attempts to take up, we are confronted by a peculiar situation here.

#### Nothing Revolutionary.

There is already, of many years' standing, a national organization devoted to the achievement of woman's suffrage. Needless to say this organization, the National Woman Suffrage association, is composed wholly of bourgeois "ultras," "radicals" and "liberals," with a marked aversion to any revolutionary indications in behalf of the working class.

Socialism is an unspeakable horror. Miss Susan B. Anthony at one time in her career made the statement that she would espouse any party that would take up the woman suffrage cause. But when the populists made the woman vote a part of their platform she could not stomach the receptacle that held the jewel, and still continued to nail the banner of her allegiance to the republican party, to which she remained faithful throughout her life. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the real revolutionary spirit within the American movement for women. She evidenced this in her attitude towards religious, social customs and the working class as well as in her demands that the shackles be taken from one half the human race.

Lucy Stone had considerable of the same daring spirit.

The modern suffrage movement is largely a pander to persons of wealth and influence.

#### Politics in the Union.

The "Socialist Woman" of Chicago has an editorial in its May number on "To Join or Not to Join." It is a discussion as to whether socialist women, in their effort to obtain the ballot, the fundamental requisite of universal, democratic control, should ally themselves with the existing woman suffrage organizations.

In the meantime Maud Malone, who was organizing secretary of the Woman's Progressive Suffrage Union of New York, has resigned from that organization, and states her reasons in a letter in the "New York Socialist." Miss Malone is not a socialist. She accuses the suffrage organization with wishing to exclude the "rabble," being devoted to the petty ambitions and prejudices of a few women, and with a nervous fear of touching the economic question.

The presentwriter can add some first hand testimony to Miss Malone's accusations. For some time she was one of the national organizers of the National Woman's Suffrage association, and for a period extending over about five years was engaged constantly in the work of the suffrage movement. Entering the work at the time the women of Colorado were making their strenuous demand for the ballot, which resulted in women becoming voters in that state in 1893, she participated in every state campaign since, where the question was put before the voters, up to the time she entered the public work of the socialist movement. She has been personally associated with Miss Anthony, Miss Shaw, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, and numerous others of the most prominent suffrage workers in the country, has worked with them in state campaigns, and she has no hesitancy in endorsing every accusation that Miss Malone makes.

#### Bourgeois Influence.

The woman suffrage movement as it exists today stands in fear and trembling of any interests for the working class. Mrs. Lena Morrow Lewis was

also an organizer for the woman suffrage movement at the same time that Mrs. Hazzlett was, and we are sure that she will corroborate these assertions. Working women are snubbed and discouraged from entering the organization, or if allowed to come in are tolerated only so long as they are docile, and show zeal in carrying out the plans of their "betters"; largely on the same principle as the "poor" are allowed to participate in the work of the churches. They can be zealous so long as they do what the big fellows want them to.

Great stress was laid on fine dressing, and the entire appeal was largely in the nature of propitiating the more "influential" classes. Moreover instead of recognizing an ally in the socialist party with its outspoken declarations for universal suffrage, the promoters of the suffrage movement have been ashamed of the cooperation of the socialists.

A few years ago at Wheeling, W. Va., when the women there were arousing considerable of an agitation on the suffrage question they were attracted by the vigor with which the socialists gave them aid. Some of the ladies of high social position even went so far as to take some of the least disagreeable looking socialists to their homes. One young man in speaking to the writer said when they drove up to the house the woman sort of looked as though she would like to ask him to go round to the back door, but she braced up and took him in the front way. But when the socialist speakers came, although a number of these dames adorned the front seat the first night, the bill-of-fare was too strenuous and they were seen around the socialist diggings no more.

#### Needs Working Class Leaven.

It is impossible for women of the working class and women of the capitalist class to unite in a common purpose on the suffrage question. The reason to-day of the apathy in the movement is because the "nice" classes that are conducting the agitation have become frightened as they see whether the empowering of working class women with the ballot is drifting.

The woman suffrage movement in America to-day is without vitality or resource. Working, feebly, as it does, on its old traditions, it is incapable of responding to the new demands that circumstances make on it, and it has found itself unable to form new ideals of action.

The socialist movement, on the contrary, is taking a new and sudden interest in woman suffrage. These socialist women that are coming so rapidly forward into our ranks seem to emphasize by their very existence the absurdity of their being nonentities in deciding the affairs on which human weal so much depends. They realize as keenly also the humiliating helplessness of their position, in a vigorous political movement with no political power, and hence we have this stir for woman suffrage in the socialist ranks. All the socialist papers are taking up the question, and now we are confronted by the question—What shall socialist women do?

#### Get to Work.

It is the opinion of the writer that the really live, important, resultful work along woman suffrage lines in the future is coming through the socialist women. They are sick and tired of this dilletante dawdling. They want something that's alive and practical. They are awakening working women all over the country. They are forming socialist women's clubs. They are beginning to send out women organizers for special work among women. Every state should have such an organizer to hold parlor meetings, and go to the homes of women. Whenever all this woman's agitation crystallizes into a woman suffrage movement, when these women, with socialist men at their side, storm legislatures, hold meetings, push their protest into the face of organized society at every crevice, there'll be something doing here as well as in England. But in the meantime let not our socialist women neglect what they might possibly be able to do with the existing suffrage organizations. If they can join these organizations in a body of say from ten to twenty women they'll probably be able to make things lively, by sticking together, in the woman suffrage camp; and in many places they can get full control of the move-

## WHY SOCIALISTS PAY DUES

(Issued by the National Committee of the Socialist Party.)

The Socialist Party, being a party of, by and for the wage-working class, and those in sympathy with it, proceeds upon the theory that the workers, as a class, must emancipate themselves from wage-slavery, and must consequently develop their own capacity for this great purpose.

Hence, while welcoming all assistance from individuals of other classes who are in sympathy with its objects and aims, the Socialist Party relies, first, last and all the time, on the working class for its support politically and otherwise. Not being a paternal organization, the means for the party's maintenance must come almost wholly from the members of the organization.

Experience having demonstrated that the party cannot trust to luck in the conduct of its affairs, nor rely upon haphazard donations for its revenues, it has established the dues-paying system, which is in vogue in the party throughout the world.

#### Objections to the Dues-Paying System.

There are those who object to the dues-paying system in our party on the following grounds:

1. It humiliates impoverished members and applicants for membership.
2. "It places the dollar above the man."
3. No other party has such a system.

#### Objections Answered.

The first reason is strictly Utopian. "Poverty is no disgrace," but is the logical result of the competitive system. This being so, it is foreign to the spirit of our movement for members or applicants to feel "humiliated" because they cannot pay dues.

Our dues system exacts payments from those who are able to pay, and all others are excused. A false feeling of shame shows a capitalistic state of mind, which must be overcome.

The second reason is also entirely erroneous. Nowhere in the world does our party exclude applicants or expel members because of their inability to pay dues. Hence the party does not "place the dollar above the man."

We emphasize the fact that all are welcome to our ranks, regardless of their financial condition, but very properly insist that all who can do so shall contribute regularly to the necessary and unavoidable expenses of the organization.

The third reason only shows the difference in methods between political parties of capitalism and the Socialist Party as a revolutionary organization of the working class. Certainly the "old parties" have no dues-paying system; in fact, they need none, as the corruption funds "for value received" are ample to support them at all times, especially during campaigns. The old parties are paternal organizations, and their support comes from above, from the trust magnates, the slave barons, or the "business men" who live on labor's fleece. The Socialist Party, on the contrary, relies upon its membership at all times for support to fight the capitalist class, not only on election day, but every other day in the year; and also to strengthen its propaganda and political organization. This means expense, and, to raise the funds in a systematic way—a dues-paying system.

The enemy can not be expected to furnish our ammunition in this great class conflict. The workers must furnish their own "sinews of war."

Socialists who have evolved through the old parties can not appreciate this position at first, but a little reflection will show its reason and its merits.

#### Principle of Dues-Paying System.

The following propositions will illustrate the reason for a dues-paying system:

1. The Socialist Party may be called the family of the working class.
2. A family, in order to live (under the competitive system), must have financial support.
3. The family necessarily relies upon its members for support.
4. It is the plain duty of all able-

bodied members of the family to contribute their share towards its maintenance.

5. As a matter of justice, and not charity, all sick, unemployed or otherwise incapacitated members of the family are excused from this obligation.

6. No "humiliation" should be felt by those of the family so crippled. But it is the duty of all the other members to provide for them, and the rule of the family is that they should do so, or leave the house.

The workman who can and will not help sustain the working class in its fight for emancipation is a useless weight dragging his comrades back under the wheels of capitalism.

#### Observations.

A narrow view of the Socialist movement and the work of the party is responsible for unwarranted protest against and disregard for the dues-paying system. Many comrades feel that their particular locality should receive entire attention and make this "criminal neglect" a reason for withholding dues.

Inasmuch as our party is national in its scope, and the funds at all times insufficient to cover the full territory, the revenues must be distributed where they will do the most good at a given time.

This might mean California one day, Vermont the next and Arizona or Wisconsin the day following. This local or state feeling should not characterize our party members, for the movement and its needs should be considered, not in part, but as a whole.

#### Dues-Paying Organizations.

It is a noticeable fact that organizations of the wage-workers the world over maintain a dues-paying system, notwithstanding the fact that the employment of the workers is precarious and spasmodic. The coal miners, for instance—whose employment does not average six months of the year—derive the revenue of their union strictly in this manner, and keep a well-filled treasury at all times. This is true of other trade union organizations; in fact all of them have ever seen the necessity of a dues-paying system.

#### The Stamp System.

The Socialist Party adopted the stamp system because it is a systematic, simple and easy way to collect dues.

Dues stamps are evidence of party membership, taking the place of receipts of money paid for dues; that is, instead of writing a receipt when a member pays dues, the member hands his membership card to the secretary, who attaches a due stamp to the card for the month for which dues are paid, this being a receipt for dues or evidence of his or her party membership.

In organized states the state secretaries purchase due stamps from the National Secretary, and in turn sell them to the local secretaries. The number of stamps paid for by a state secretary signifies the number of members in that state. The number of stamps paid for by a local secretary to the state secretary signifies the number of members in that local. In unorganized states, local secretaries deal direct with the National Office.

#### Conclusion.

The principal objections to the dues-paying system come from outside the large cities, where there is little, if any, industrial organization, and where the concept of the movement is more "ideal" than practical. The objections are more sentimental than logical, being based on a "mistaken" principle. We must not forget that we are living under the competitive system, and that pending its abolition our movement requires funds for its support from its members; that we must have system for this purpose, and that dependence on "philanthropists" and "voluntary subscriptions" alone, tends to demoralize, rather than to strengthen the party. The emancipation of the working class must rest with the working class, who alone can keep the movement true to its purpose.

And this is why Socialists pay dues.

#### TO AFFILIATE WITH SOCIALISTS.

A certain central committee has been maintained by the Slavic comrades, unattached to the party, and of which Comrade Petrich of Chicago acted as secretary. The organization was composed of twelve locals in different parts of the country and known as the "Slavonic Socialist Association." The Chicago branch has joined the party and Comrade Petrich reports that each branch will become an integral part of their respective state organizations. A weekly publication in this language is being issued, entitled "Proletarec." Address 57 South Center Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

## Bell Telephone Strike Is Settled

### Ending of a Long Drawn Out and Hard Fought Labor Battle—Unions Victorious.

After a siege of fifteen months the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone company has capitulated to the demands of the strikers. Too much credit can not be given the telephone girls for the gallant fight they have made. They have shown a courage and devotion to union principles that would put many a strong man to shame. The following is the agreement signed and ratified by a vote of the unions:

"Mr. Alexander Fairgrieve,  
President of Montana Federation,  
City.

Dear Sir:

When the contract was drawn up for signature the schedule of operators' hours was omitted. I beg to state that straight nine hours shall be given the operators, which time was considered the working time previous to this agreement in the state. All conditions subscribed in previous agreements will be adhered to. The Butte agreement will remain in force as according to previous contract.

H. S. BURDICK,  
Supt. Division."

#### The Agreement.

Agreement between the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone company and the Montana Federation of Labor:

First—A contract will be entered into for one year in accordance with the terms of this settlement.

Second—All present operators will be permitted to join the Operators' union, where such exists, and the union will be permitted to persuade peacefully any operator to become a member of its organization.

Third—Operators employed at Butte, Helena, Great Falls, Livingston, Billings and Red Lodge at the time of the strike will be reinstated, but present operators will not be removed, except at the option of the company. All new operators employed at these exchanges during the life of contract must join the union immediately after their first pay day. No member of the Operators' union shall be discriminated against for any acts performed during the period of the strike.

Fourth—Miss Barnes will be re-

moved from the operating department at Butte.

Fifth—No chief operator shall belong to the union. Foremen may or may not belong to the union.

Sixth—All damage suits now pending, or contemplated, against any union or unions, or members thereof, instituted by the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone company, or its agents, arising from the acts of any union, or member thereof, to be dismissed, and any suits now pending or contemplated against the aforesaid company, or its agents, by any union, or union members, to be dismissed.

Seventh—The union linemen employed by the company in Montana previous to the strike will be reinstated, but linemen now employed will not be removed, except at the option of the company, except that in Butte all linemen now employed who shall not become members of the union shall be removed. Those linemen who have not been members of the union shall be given an opportunity to join said union. The company will have no objection to any linemen in the state joining the union.

Eighth—Wage scale of operators to remain the same as in force under agreements of Butte, February 15, 1907; Helena, February 23, 1907, and Great Falls, March 25, 1907. Wage scale for operators in Billings, Livingston and Red Lodge to be the same as agreed between Montana Federation of Labor and Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone company at Salt Lake conference July 24, 1907.

Ninth—Fifty cents increase per day for linemen and cable splicers working by the day in Montana outside of Butte, over wages prevailing previous to the strike, will remain in force.

Tenth—Application for reinstatement by former employees shall be made in person, at former place of employment, within fifteen days after the publication of this settlement.

Eleventh—The Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone company to be called "fair" throughout the State of Montana.

Twelfth—This agreement continues in force after expiration of contract unless thirty days' notice of desired change be given by either party.

## MINERS ARE WARNED TO STAY AWAY FROM ALASKA.

Nome, Alaska, March 1, 1908.

To all Wage Workers:

The capitalist press and steamship companies, in order to further exploit the working class, will spread and are now actually spreading false reports as to the conditions at present existing in this country.

They desire to flood Seward Peninsula with unemployed working men in order that they may reduce wages, winter and summer, below outside prices, and are endeavoring to show that work will be plentiful and wages high this coming season. Employment sharks in the states are likewise circulating such reports.

As a matter of fact prospects were never worse and conditions here are an exact counterpart of those outside. But little money has been in circulation since last December; the banks have issued clearing house script which is used instead of U. S. currency; no important discoveries have been made this winter, while some of the largest mines employing the greatest number of men have been worked out. Miners and prospectors returning daily from other diggings report nothing doing, and thus swelling the army of unemployed, which consists of at least seventy-five per cent of the laboring population.

The Western Federation of Miners by thoroughly organizing the camp and strictly enforcing the closed shop, have been thus far partially able to maintain the winter scale of wages.

The employers and transportation companies, knowing these facts, are trying to allure working men here, as has been stated, to so reduce wages as to compel them to work for what in reality amounts to their board. To prevent such a calamity to the working class the Western Federation of Miners warns all working men to keep

away from this country during the coming summer.

North, east, south and west of the peninsula most unfavorable reports as to the alarming conditions from a miner's point of view are constantly arriving. In fact, every working man who arrives here is one more out of work, and he himself is his passage money out of pocket.

And once here, how are you going to get out? Hundreds here are daily asking themselves the same question.

Take heed therefore of this warning. Fellow workers; stay away from the Seward Peninsula during 1908. If you have contemplated coming up here, change your mind and stay where you are.

Published by authority of Local 240 of the Western Federation of Miners.

#### SELF RELIANT WORKING MEN TO START CO-OPERATIVE STORE.

Sunday, May 24, in the parlors of the Workers' Educational club there will be a meeting of the representatives of the labor unions of Helena to devise ways and means to start a co-operative store. Every union in Helena, with the exception of two that have not yet been visited, has appointed a committee of three to represent them at this meeting. It is understood it will be modeled after the Rochdale Co-operative society of England. This society started in 1844 with 28 members and a subscribed capital of 28 pounds. It has grown until today it does a business of over half a billion dollars a year and owns business blocks, factories, farms, dairies, steamships, docks, newspapers and other enterprises. It is an encouraging sign to see the working men waking up to a realization of the possibilities of organized effort in supplying their own wants.